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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with article 9, paragraph 2, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the work programme of the Unit for 1997-1998 and the preliminary programme of work for 1998-1999.

* A/52/150 and Corr.1.

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ANNEX

Programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit for 1997-1998 and preliminary programme of work for 1998-1999

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The following work programmes have been drawn up in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the statute of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 31/192 of 22 December 1976, and take into account the guidelines laid out in successive Assembly resolutions on the functioning of the Unit, in particular resolution 50/233 of 7 June 1996. Section II contains the JIU programme of work for 1997-1998 and section III a preliminary programme of work for 1998-1999 that lists potential subjects the Unit has identified to be dealt with after the completion of the ongoing reports. As hitherto, the programme of work is subject to change in the course of the year: new reports may be added; planned reports may be modified, postponed or cancelled when circumstances warrant; and titles may be changed to reflect the new thrust of reports. The Unit would highly appreciate receiving any comments from the Member States, the legislative organs, other external and internal oversight bodies and the secretariats of participating organizations on the content of the programme of work for 1997-1998 and/or the preliminary programme of work for 1998-1999.

II. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1997-1998

A. Reports on management, budgetary and administrative issues

1. Review of management and administration in the International Labour Organization

2. The report will be the first in a series following up on the recent JIU report on accountability, management improvement and oversight in the United Nations system (A/50/503 and Add.1). The series will begin with a review of the recent major management reforms and initiatives listed for ILO in section II of that report. In conducting the review, consideration will be given to the applicability of the recommendations contained in section I of the report. Similar follow-up reviews will be undertaken by JIU for other participating organizations in future years.

2. A comparative analysis of procedures and costs for the production and distribution of documents by organizations of the United Nations system

3. This report will review the procedures, and related cost implications, used throughout the United Nations system for the production and distribution of documents, with an in-depth examination of the various alternatives used. The purpose would be to develop recommendations for speeding the production and distribution of documents, for making the information in them more accessible to

Member States and for reducing the costs involved. In preparing the report, special attention would be given to determining the extent to which advantage is being taken of modern technologies, relating to electronic processing in particular, and to examining efforts to reflect the current concern for reducing printed matter produced by organizations of the United Nations system. Plans for this report reflect the merger of two related suggestions from the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Information Technology Services Division of the Secretariat.

3. Common and joint services in Vienna

4. This report, suggested by the secretariat of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), will be the fourth by the Unit on the subject of common services. The first report reviewed United Nations system common premises and services in the field (A/49/629). The second report reviewed common services for United Nations system organizations co-located in New York (A/51/686). The third report, which reviews common services for United Nations system organizations co-located in Geneva, is being completed currently as part of the 1996-1997 programme of work of the Unit. The reports in the series have a common objective: to contribute to the establishment of a more rational inter-organizational framework for the development, operation and management of common services with a view to reduced overhead costs, increased collaboration and cost-effectiveness at major duty stations.

4. Use of experts and consultants in the United Nations system

5. This report will examine the implementation of the current policies, mandates, rules, practices and procedures on the use of experts and consultants in a number of organizations of the United Nations system. It will focus, in particular, on: (a) whether the current principles guiding the use of experts and consultants in the organizations of the system are still valid and relevant in the context of ongoing processes of reform, budgetary stringencies and limitations on regular staff resources; (b) whether present procedures for hiring United Nations experts and consultants are efficient and cost-effective; (c) methodology and procedures to identify tasks that cannot be performed by regular staff and require the use of outside experts and consultants; (d) qualifications of experts and consultants; and (e) the geographical basis for recruitment of experts and consultants. The objective is to identify problems and recommend solutions regarding these matters. This will be the Unit's sixth report dealing with the topic of experts and consultants; the most recent one was issued in 1982.

5. Role and impact of the United Nations Office for Project Services in operational activities

6. The main objective of this report is to examine the role and impact of the United Nations Office for Project Services in operational activities within the context of current United Nations system reform efforts. The Office was established by the General Assembly in 1995 and works in partnership with the

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations bodies. It is the successor to the Division of Project Execution created in UNDP in 1973, which was renamed as the Office for Project Execution in 1975. In 1988 it became the Office for Project Services. JIU conducted an evaluation of the Office for Project Execution in 1983 (A/39/80).

6. Review of Administrative Committee on Coordination machinery

7. This report, focusing on the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its subsidiary bodies, is the first JIU has undertaken on the subject. Its main objective is to review the structure, functions and cost-effectiveness of the Committee. It aims, to the extent possible, at promoting collaboration, common vision and standardization within the United Nations system. In this report the Unit expects to be able to recommend measures that would enhance the ability of the Committee to provide strategic direction for the whole United Nations system in addressing high-profile issues identified by central intergovernmental bodies. The report responds to increasing calls by Member States for a more cohesive, cost-effective United Nations system.

7. Review of the United Nations University

8. In the light of the discussions on the United Nations University (UNU) by the Economic and Social Council in July 1997 and also taking into account that UNU has been in existence for more than 20 years without a proper external evaluation, JIU is prepared to undertake a comprehensive review of the University. The review will cover the functioning of UNU and issues facing it, focusing, among other things, on the management, the organizational structure, the governance arrangements and the relevance of its activities to the emerging needs of the larger United Nations community.

8. Policies and practices in the use of private management consulting firms by United Nations system organizations

9. The Unit anticipates that this report will identify, on a system-wide basis, the rationale for the practices regarding the use of the services of private management consulting firms as part of the strengthening of management oversight; costs involved in such practice will be explored and conclusions and recommendations are expected to be drawn with regard to system-wide standards, guidelines and procedures for engaging the services of private management consultant firms. The Unit also foresees that this report will pay due regard to the use of internal and external oversight services as a primary source of expertise in the management field.

B. Reports on operational activities for development

1. United Nations system support for science and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean

10. Since the adoption in 1979 of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development, this subject had become a prominent feature of the legislative directives and the substantive and operational programmes of organizations within the United Nations system. In line with relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the report will evaluate, on the basis of selected projects, the effective contribution of the United Nations system to endogenous capacity-building in science and technology. This will be the third of a series of JIU reports on the subject. The two previous ones were on Africa (A/50/125-E/1995/19) and on Asia and the Pacific (A/50/721). This evaluation was originally suggested by UNDP.

2. The use of information systems and information technology in support of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa

11. This report combines two of the current priority issues in the United Nations system: development in Africa, as reflected in the new strategic directions being adopted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, and the use of information systems and information technology in the United Nations system, in line with the African Information Society Initiative adopted by ECA at its Conference of Ministers in May 1996. The report is included in the 1997-1998 work programme as an internal proposal and serves as a practical follow-up to the report on the use of information systems and information technology in the United Nations system to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session. The principal objective of the report is to identify ways in which United Nations system organizations can take better advantage of the potential of information systems and information technology to assist in leapfrogging the development effort in Africa.

III. PRELIMINARY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1998-1999

12. The following are indications of subjects that the Inspectors have identified as potential reports to be prepared during the course of 1998-1999. Most of these subjects have been suggested by the Secretariats of the participating organizations, while others have been generated internally. The list is tentative and does not necessarily imply that JIU is committed to taking up these subjects.

Management, budgetary and administrative issues

1. Practices and procedures for the procurement and awarding of contracts.

2. Review of management and administration in the World Health Organization.

3. Effectiveness of the performance appraisal system in the United Nations.

4. Planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation procedures in the United Nations system.

5. Marketing of United Nations revenue-producing activities.

6. Archival policy for organizations of the United Nations system.

7. Evaluation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

8. Practice and procedures for senior-level appointments.

9. Review of the administrative and financial management systems of the International Court of Justice.